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USSN 10/803,764

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend claims 1-4 and 6-10, without prejudice or disclaimer, as follows.

Claim 1 (currently amended): A contact structure for a sliding switch, comprising:

a first and second conductive stationary contacts disposed on a base;

a third conductive stationary contact disposed on said base, said third stationary contact including first and second conductive regions; and

a conductive movable contact for electrically contacting at least one of said stationary contacts, said movable contact being movable along a path between a non-contact position and a make contact position with respect to said at least one stationary contact,

at least one of said stationary contact and said movable contact having a protruding portion that configured to provides an electrical interface for discharge of arcing as said movable contact breaks from said stationary contact,

Claim 2 (currently amended): ~~The A~~ contact structure for a sliding switch as recited in claim 1, wherein at least one of said stationary contacts is a flat pad.

Claim 3 (currently amended): ~~The A~~ contact structure for a sliding switch as recited in claim 2, wherein said movable contact is generally substantially shaped as a cylinder.

Claim 4 (currently amended): ~~The A~~ contact structure for a sliding switch as recited in claim 3, wherein a central axis of said movable contact is oriented such that a radius of said cylinder is parallel with respect perpendicular to said path.

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Claim 5 (cancelled)

Claim 6 (currently amended): A contact structure for a sliding switch, comprising:

a first and second conductive stationary contacts disposed on a base;

a third conductive stationary contact disposed on said base, said third stationary contact including first and second conductive regions;

a conductive movable contact disposed to ~~slide with respect~~ move relative to said first and second stationary contacts along a path extending ~~between~~ from a non-contact position, where in which said movable contact is electrically isolated from at least one of said stationary contacts ~~and to~~ a make-contact position, in which ~~where~~ said movable contact maintains a primary electrical interface with said at least one stationary contact;

a contacting zone defined on said at least one stationary contact that electrically makes contact ~~with~~ said movable contact when said movable contact is in said make-contact position; and

an arcing zone defined on said at least one stationary contact that ~~electrically breaks from or makes~~ terminates electrical contact with said movable contact when said movable contact moves from said make-contact position to said non-contact position or and vice versa initiates electrical contact with said movable contact when said movable contact moves from said non-contact position to said make-contact position, said arcing zone providing an electrical interface where arcing occurs between said stationary contact and said movable contact,

wherein said stationary contact and said movable contact are mutually shaped and oriented such that when said contacting zone is projected along said path onto said arcing zone, at least a portion of a projection of said contacting zone lies outside said arcing zone,

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thereby providing a region within said contacting zone which is generally outside of an arcing erosion debris path created by said movable contact as said movable contact slides moves across said stationary contact along said path.

Claim 7 (currently amended): A method of preventing degradation in performance of a sliding switch comprising the steps of:

providing a first and second conductive stationary contacts disposed on a base;

providing a third conductive stationary contact disposed on said base, said third stationary contact including first and second conductive regions;

providing a conductive movable contact for electrically contacting at least one of said stationary contacts, said movable contact being movable along a path between a non-contact position and a make contact position with respect to said stationary contact;

and causing arcing to occur outside said path upon engagement or disengagement between said conductive moveable contacts and said at least one stationary contact.

Claim 8 (currently amended): A method of preventing degradation in performance of a sliding switch comprising the steps of:

providing a first and second conductive stationary contacts disposed on a base;

providing a third conductive stationary contact disposed on said base, said third stationary contact including first and second conductive regions;

providing a conductive movable contact for electrically contacting at least one of said stationary contacts, said movable contact being movable along a path between a make contact position and a non-contact position with respect to said at least one stationary contact; and

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providing at least one protrusion on at least one of said contacts to provide an electrical interface for discharge of arcing as said movable contact breaks from said at least one stationary contact, wherein said at least one protrusion being is configured to direct said discharge of arcing away from at least a portion of said path.

a first and second conductive stationary contacts disposed on a base;

a third conductive stationary contact disposed on said base, said third stationary contact including first and second conductive regions;

Claim 9 (currently amended): A contact structure for a sliding switch, comprising:

a first and a second conductive stationary contacts disposed on a base;

a third conductive stationary contact disposed on said base, said third stationary contact including first and second conductive regions; and

a conductive movable contact for electrically connecting said first and second stationary contacts, said movable contact being movable ~~between from~~ a make contact position, in which wherein said movable contact electrically connects said stationary contacts, and to a non-contact position, in which wherein said stationary contacts are electrically isolated from one another, said movable contact being ~~adapted~~ configured to ~~break from simultaneously terminate electrical contact with both of~~ said first and second stationary contacts as said movable contact moves from said make contact position toward said non-contact position.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A contact structure for a sliding switch, comprising:

a first and a second conductive stationary contacts of a first polarity disposed on a base;

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a conductive third stationary contact of a second polarity opposite said first polarity disposed on said base, said third stationary contact including a first and a second conductive portion;

an ~~insulation insulator~~ disposed so as to electrically isolate between said first, second, and third stationary contacts and between said first and second conductive portions of said third stationary contact; and

a conductive movable contact disposed configured to slide move along a path from between a first contact position, in which wherein said movable contact electrically connects said first stationary contact and said first portion of said third stationary contact, and to a second contact position, in which wherein said movable contact electrically connects said second stationary contact and said second portion of said third stationary contact,

wherein said path includes a non-contact position being located between said first and second contact positions, in which non-contact position wherein said stationary contacts are electrically isolated from one another; and

wherein said movable contact being is adapted to break from configured to terminate electrical contact with said first portion of said third stationary contact before said movable contact breaks from terminates electrical contact with said first stationary contact as said movable contact moves from said first contact position toward said non-contact position thereby directing discharge of arcing to said third stationary contact and preventing degradation of insulation performance between said first and second stationary contacts.

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